



Staying Safe and Legal

Safety should be every motorist's goal.

But emergency situations do arise, and information on the following pages can help all motorists travel New Jersey's roadways in a safe and courteous manner.

In the following chapters, also find information on penalties motorists will be subject to for breaking New Jersey's motor vehicle regulations, and what specific services MVC facilities provide.

Keeping New Jersey's roadways safe is every motorist's responsibility.

Road Signs

Road signs and traffic signals indicate an array of information that helps motorists to remain safe and courteous on the roads. Obeying the many signals and signs is a necessary component of keeping New Jersey roadways safe at all times.

Learn what each sign and signal means.

Signs provide Regulatory, Warning and Guidance indications. Signs and signals regulate traffic speed and movement; warn of hazards that may otherwise be difficult to see; and, guide motorists to destinations by clearly identifying routes.

Traffic Signals

When traffic signals are hung vertically, the red light is always on top, and the yellow light is always directly below the red light and directly above the green light. If there is a green turn arrow, it will always be on the bottom.

If the traffic signal is hung horizontally, the red light is always on the left.



Red Light

Motorists must stop before the intersection or crosswalk and remain stopped until the light changes to green.

Yellow Light

Traffic should stop before entering an intersection or crosswalk for a yellow light unless the vehicle is too close to the intersection to stop safely. A yellow arrow means the signal is changing from green to red, and gives the driver a chance to stop safely.

Green Light

Proceed through the intersection.

When shown as an arrow in combination with the red signal, proceed only as shown by the arrow. Be cautious and yield to pedestrians.

Flashing Yellow Light

Slow down and proceed through intersection with care.

Flashing Red Light

Stop. Yield to all traffic and pedestrians. Proceed only when clear.

Unlit Signal

Stop if a signal is unlit and no police officer or other person is directing traffic. Yield to traffic approaching from right and left. Proceed only when clear.

Orange Steady Raised Palm

Pedestrians must wait on the sidewalk at an intersection. Any pedestrian already walking through the intersection during this signal should exit quickly.

White Steady Pedestrian Silhouette / Countdown Pedestrian Signal with White Steady Pedestrian Silhouette

Pedestrians may proceed through the intersection in a crosswalk. New Jersey law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians legally in a crosswalk.

Color	Shape	Number of Sides	Message
White	Vertical Rectangle	4	Regulation (speed)*
Blue	Rectangle, Square	4	Motorists' Services and Information
Brown	Rectangle	4	Public Recreation and Scenic Guidance
Green	Rectangle	4	Direction Guidance
Orange	Diamond	4	Construction and Maintenance Warning
Red	Octagon	8	STOP sign only
Red	Triangle	3	YIELD sign only
White	Various	Various	Regulation
Yellow	Pennant	3	No passing warning sign
Yellow	Pentagon	5	School signs
Yellow	Round	-	Railroad warning signs
Yellow	Diamond	4	Warning signs

*When the maximum safe speed around a curve or turn is lower than the posted speed limit, an advisory speed sign is used with the proper warning sign.

Road Work Signs

These signs alert drivers to a variety of temporary roadway conditions. Look for Orange, diamond-shaped signs that warn motorists of lane closings, lane shifts, flaggers, uneven pavement and detours.

In New Jersey, all traffic fines are doubled in work zones.



Sharp Turn Ahead



Divided Highway



Cattle Crossing



Winding Road



Merge



Hill



Lane Reduction Ahead



Cross Road



Railroad



School



Slippery When Wet



Hospital



Handicapped



Yield Ahead



Signal Ahead



Workers



Flagman Ahead



Detour



Road Closed



Stop Sign



Left Turn Only



No Trucks



Multiple Turning Lanes



Do Not Enter



No U-Turns



No Parking Any Time



Do Not Pass



Advisory Ramp Speed



Side Road



No Passing Zone



Stop Sign Ahead



Two Lane Traffic



Road Narrows



Road Closed



Reserved Parking



U.S. Route Marker



State Route Marker



Rest Area



Stop Here on Red



County Route Marker



Exit Marker



Mile Marker



No Standing Any Time



No Pedestrians



No Turns



Left Turn Only



Interstate



Left or Straight Only



Bus / Car Pool Lane



One Way



Keep Right



Wrong Way



No Parking Icon



Yield



No Right Turn

Special Warning Signs

These fluorescent and reflective orange triangular signs alert motorists to slow-moving vehicles, such as farm and construction equipment operating on public highways.



HOV

White diamonds indicate high occupancy vehicle lanes reserved for a particular vehicle type or vehicles carrying multiple riders as identified by regulatory signs. These signs will also indicate hours that HOV lanes are in operation. HOV lanes may also be marked with white diamonds painted on the pavement.





Emergency Situations

Skids

Sudden turns, lane changes or hard braking can cause a car to skid. On wet or icy roads, the potential to skid increases.

In both front- and rear-wheel drive vehicles, handle a skid the same way: If the rear end of the vehicle starts to skid, do not touch the gas pedal; do not make a quick turn away from the direction of the skid; turn in the direction in which the rear of the vehicle is skidding, but do not over-steer; and, try not to brake during a side skid.

Emergency Stops

When stopping for an emergency on a highway with paved shoulders, signal first and then steer onto the shoulder at or near the speed of traffic. Then slow down. When steering onto an unpaved shoulder, signal, slow down and then steer to the shoulder.

In dusk, darkness or bad weather, turn on the vehicle's parking lights or hazard lights (emergency lights) once on the shoulder of the roadway.

Do not block the vehicle's taillights at night by standing or working behind the vehicle. Day or night, put a flare or another warning device just behind the vehicle. Put another warning device at least 300 feet back (about 120 paces). Raise the hood. Tie a white handkerchief to the antenna or left door to signal for help.

Running off the Pavement

If a vehicle drifts off the roadway onto the shoulder, slow down, regain control of the vehicle and steer slowly back onto the roadway when safe.

Car Fires

Most car fires are caused by short circuits in the vehicle's electrical system. In case of fire, do not waste time. All passengers should leave the vehicle at once. If there is no fire extinguisher available, try to smother the burning wires with any heavy cloth, dirt or sand. Do not use water to put out an electrical fire. Do not grip burning wires with bare hands.

If the fire is burning out-of-control, move away quickly from the vehicle. The gas tank could explode.

Plunging into Water

A vehicle that plunges into a body of water will float from three to 10 minutes if all windows and doors are closed.

A front-engine car will sink nose first. A rear-engine car will sink tail first.

It's important to remain calm. Always wear a seat belt, which will help the driver survive the impact of plunging into a body of water.

Before water reaches window level, try to escape from the vehicle through an open window. It is nearly impossible, because of water pressure, to open a door. A window, though, can be easily rolled down. Power windows may short out. Try to open power windows right away in this type of emergency.

Stalling on Railroad Tracks

Try to move a vehicle with standard transmission off the railroad tracks by running the starter in low or second gear. If this does not work, exit the vehicle and try to push it from the tracks.

Move an automatic transmission vehicle by pushing the vehicle from the tracks.

If a train is approaching, and the vehicle is still on the tracks, walk away quickly from the vehicle alongside the tracks toward the train.

Car Failure

Regardless of the age or condition of a vehicle, there is always the possibility of vehicle failure.

Brake Failure

Quickly shift to a low gear if conventional drum and disc brakes fail while the vehicle is in motion. Pump the brake pedal hard several times quickly. This may build up sufficient brake pressure to slow the vehicle.

As a last resort, use the parking brake. Hold the parking brake release in case the vehicle begins to skid.

With the vehicle in a low gear, look for a place to stop off of the roadway. Call or signal for help. Do not attempt to drive the vehicle.

Tire Blowout

Grip the steering wheel firmly after a tire blowout, and keep the vehicle going straight. Slow down gradually. Let up on the gas pedal. Do not press the brake pedal. Let the vehicle coast to a stop. Signal to pull off the road and press the brake pedal when the vehicle is almost stopped.

Power Steering Failure

If the engine dies, keep a firm grip on the steering wheel. Steering will become very difficult. Restart the engine if possible. Signal and safely pull off of the roadway. Call or signal for help.

Headlight Failure

Stop the car safely if the headlights fail. Try the dimmer switch. That often will put the lights on again. Try the headlight switch several times. Turn on hazard or emergency lights, and the parking lights.

Gas Pedal Problems

If a vehicle's gas pedal is stuck, remain calm and focused. Quickly shift to neutral. Signal and safely pull off of the roadway. Bring the car to a stop. Turn off the engine.

Hood Latch Failure

If the hood suddenly unlatches and lifts up while the car is in motion, slow down safely and quickly. Try to look under the hood to see the road. If this does not work, roll down the driver-side window and look out to see the road. Use the centerline or other lane marking as a guide. Pull off of the road and stop.

Windshield Wiper Failure

Slow down if windshield wipers fail during a snow or rainstorm. Roll down the driver-side window and look out of it to see the road. Pull off of the road and stop.

Accidents

Avoiding Collisions

Emergencies do arise. Remember these three things every motorist can do to make an inevitable collision less dangerous: Stop, turn or speed up.

To stop quickly:

Pump conventional drum and disc brakes for better control and steering. Locking these brakes by pushing the brake pedal too hard and holding it will cause the car to skid.

Anti-lock brakes adjust automatically if wheels begin to lock. With this type of braking system, put maximum pressure on the brake pedal.

To turn quickly:

If it is not possible to stop to avoid a collision, turn away so the collision is not head on. Run off the road if necessary. Try not to use the brakes while turning to lessen the chance of skidding.

To speed up:

Speed up to avoid a collision from the side or from behind if there is room to escape the danger. Push the gas pedal to the floor. Be sure to slow down once the danger has passed.

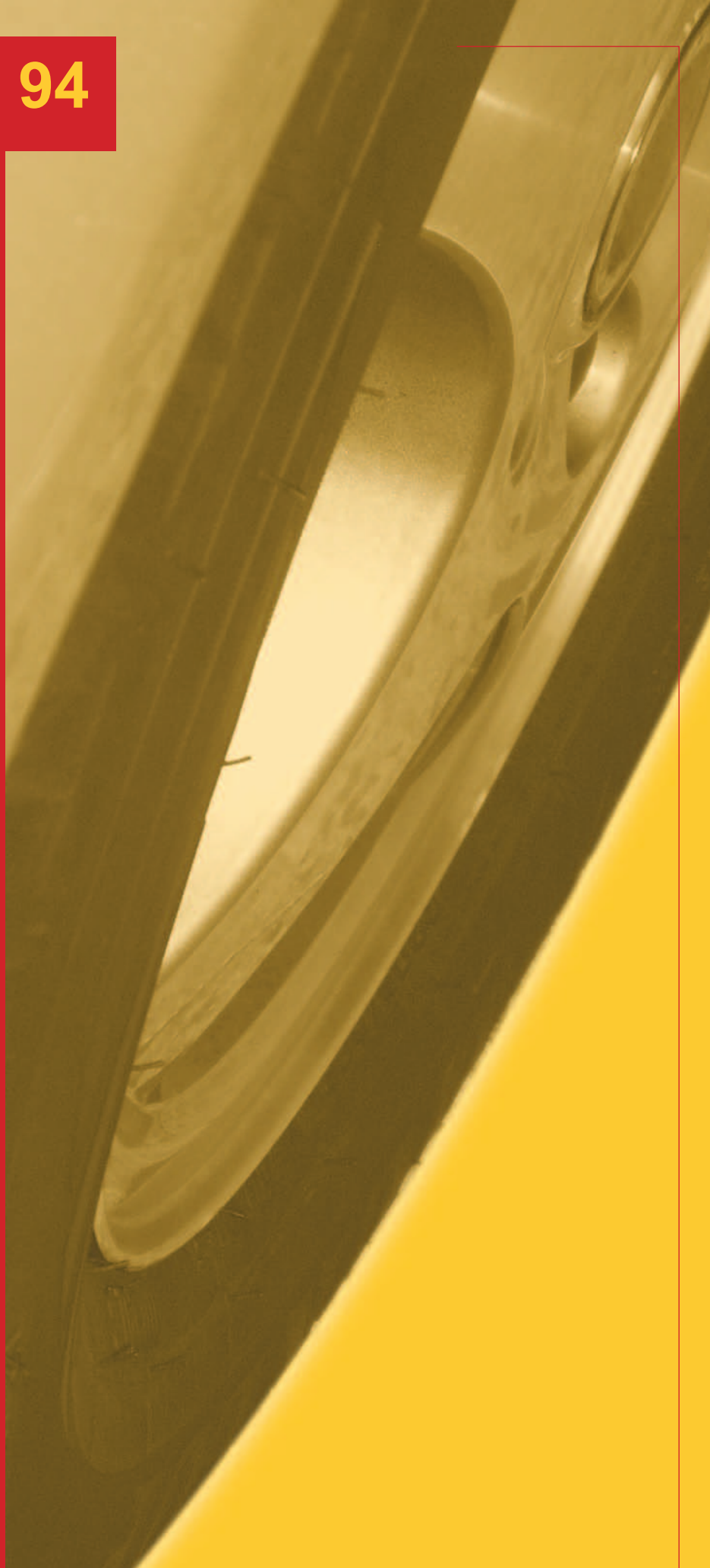
Last-Minute Choices

In the few seconds before a collision, try not to panic. Last-second choices exist and can help motorists in emergency situations.

If a collision looks imminent, turn away from oncoming traffic even if it means leaving the roadway. Drive off the road. If necessary, choose to hit something that will give way. If it is necessary, try to make the collision a glancing blow, or a sideswipe.

Rear Collision

Be ready to apply brakes after being hit from the rear. Try to avoid hitting any vehicle ahead.



Side Collision

Keep a tight grip on the steering wheel. This may keep the driver from being thrown against the side of the car during a side collision.

Head-on Collision

In a head-on collision, use arms and hands for protection when wearing a shoulder harness. If the shoulder harness is not in use, lay across the front seats to avoid hitting the steering wheel or windshield.

What to do in Case of an Accident

The first thing to do after being involved in an accident is stop.

Then, get help. Wait at the accident scene, but do not block traffic if possible. Stay calm and seek assistance. Notify the police and emergency personnel. Depending on the location of the accident, warn oncoming traffic.

Reporting Accidents

New Jersey law requires motorists to notify police of accidents that have caused injury, death or car or property damage.

Help law enforcement officials by answering questions about the accident and providing facts.

When property damage is more than \$500, or personal injury has occurred, motorists must:

- send a written report to MVC within 10 days if no police report is filed
- notify insurance company

Parked Car Accidents

Notify the police after hitting a parked car. Attempt to locate the owner. Leave a note providing personal and contact information on the parked car if the owner cannot be located. The note should include name, address and driver license number.

Steering Wheel Locking Device

Never turn a vehicle's ignition switch to the "lock" position while the vehicle is still in motion. This will cause the steering wheel to lock if it is turned, causing the complete loss of control of the vehicle.

General MVC Information

Agencies and Regional Service Centers

Each of New Jersey's 21 counties has at least one motor vehicle agency. Counties with larger populations have several.

Regional Service Centers (RSC) offer more services. There are four RSCs. They are located in Eatontown, Trenton, Wayne and West Deptford.

RSCs

These centers are a critical part of MVC's effort to make more motor vehicle services available closer to motorists' homes and places of business.

Each RSC offers a full-service motor vehicle agency and other, additional services, like driver conferences and CDL issuance.

Only the Eatontown RSC provides vehicle inspection facilities.

RSCs are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and, on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Each RSC also has a late night. Check www.njmvc.gov, or call (888) 486-3339 for more information on RSC hours.

(Individuals with temporary immigration status must complete most MVC business at an RSC; except for those motorists who have a temporary visa restricted driver license who need to renew it.)

Motor Vehicle Agencies

Complete titling, registration and licensing for passenger vehicles at motor vehicle agencies. There are 45 around the state.

Motor vehicle agencies are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and, on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Each motor vehicle agency also has a late night. Check www.njmvc.gov, or call (888) 486-3339 for more information on motor vehicle agency hours.

Driver Testing Centers

All driver testing centers are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Some provide evening hours. Check www.njmvc.gov to schedule a road test online or find a location, or call (888) 486-3339 for more information on driver testing centers.

Inspection Facilities

Several types of inspection facilities are available to motorists in New Jersey.

A state-run *central inspection facility* is provided to motorists in 31 locations around New Jersey. These facilities inspect all types of standard vehicles. These facilities are open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and have one late night each week; and, on Saturday from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Some central inspection facilities are appointment-only. Others are specialty inspection facilities, which inspect only certain vehicles.

Check www.njmvc.gov, or call (888) 486-3339 for more information on inspection facilities.

Private facilities are located at more than 1,400 locations around the state at gas stations and auto body repair shops. For a list of these facilities, check www.njmvc.gov.



Violations and Fines

- Drivers convicted of unsafe driving that endangers a person or property are subject to a fine of not less than \$50 or more than \$150 for the first offense.
- Drivers convicted of reckless driving that willfully endangers a person or property are subject to up to 60 days imprisonment, or a fine of not less than \$50 or more than \$200, or both. Motor vehicle points are assessed.
- Drivers found to have abandoned a vehicle on or along limited access highways for four hours or more are subject to a fine of not less than \$100 or more than \$500, including the possible loss of driving privileges for two years.
- Drivers carrying open or unsealed alcoholic beverage containers in passenger areas of motor vehicles are subject to a fine of \$200 for a first offense.
- Drivers of private vehicles are subject to fines between \$200 and \$1,000 for each piece of ice that falls from the vehicle and causes death, injury or property damage. Commercial vehicle drivers are subject to fines between \$500 and \$1,500.
- Drivers convicted of moving violations in highway construction zones are subject to fines being doubled.
- Drivers convicted of speeding 10 mph or more above the posted speed limit in a 65 mph zone are subject to fines being doubled.
- Drivers are subject to a \$50 fine for failing to comply with a police officer's request to illuminate the inside of the vehicle following a traffic stop.
- Drivers convicted of insurance fraud are subject to fines up to \$5,000 or up to three years imprisonment, or both.
- Drivers convicted of any drug offense in any federal or state court are subject to an automatic driving privilege suspension.
- Drivers falsifying information on a driver license or registration application are subject to a fine of not less than \$200 or more than \$500 and/or up to six months imprisonment, and suspension of driving privileges between six months and two years.
- Altering, forging and/or possessing a facsimile of a New Jersey driver license with the intent to distribute, is illegal. Conviction could result in driver license suspension, fines up to \$10,000 and up to 18 months imprisonment.

Driving while driver license or registration is suspended:

- **First Offense**

up to \$500 fine, six months additional suspension

- **Second Offense**

up to \$750 fine, up to five days imprisonment, six months additional suspension

- **Third Offense**

up to \$1,000 fine, up to 10-days imprisonment, six months additional suspension

Drivers continuing to drive:

While suspended for failing to pay an insurance surcharge will receive an additional \$3,000 fine.

While license or registration is suspended for failure to insure a motor vehicle will receive an additional \$500 fine, additional suspension of one to two years and/or imprisonment up to 90 days.

While license or registration is suspended and become involved in an accident in which a person is injured, are subject to a fine, an additional license suspension and a minimum imprisonment of 45 days.

While license or registration is suspended for a drug or alcohol offense, or for refusing to take a breath test, or if considered a habitual offender, are subject to a \$500 fine and an additional suspension of one to two years and/or possible 10 to 90 day imprisonment.

After failing to install an interlock device as ordered by the court, are subject to a one-year suspension in addition to any other suspension.

Drivers:

Refusing a breath or chemical test on or within 1,000 feet of school property are subject to a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000 and a one-year driver license suspension.

Allowing a driver suspended for driving under the influence to operate a motor vehicle are subject to driver license and registration suspensions.

Loaning a driver license to another driver are subject to a fine not more than \$100 and a suspension of driving privileges.

Other violations exist. For a more complete listing, visit www.njmvc.gov.

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24-Hour Telephone Information and Assistance

General Customer Information

(888) 486-3339

toll free in New Jersey

(609) 292-6500

from out-of-state

For License Suspensions and Restorations

(609) 292-7500

Customer Service Representatives are available from
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday*

*Detailed information (recorded) is available after those hours, seven days a week, including holidays.

To call MVC using the TDD communication system, look in the blue pages of your telephone directory under Motor Vehicle Commission.

Vehicle Inspection Information

(888) NJMOTOR

toll free in New Jersey

(609) 895-6886

from out of state

Customer Service Representatives are available from
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday,
Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.



NJ Motor Vehicle Commission
www.njmvc.gov